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(54) **CASE-INSENSITIVE CUSTOM TAG
RECOGNITION AND HANDLING**

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(58) **Field of Search** **707/513, 102; 715/513, 500.1, 511, 517, 540, 526; 345/760**

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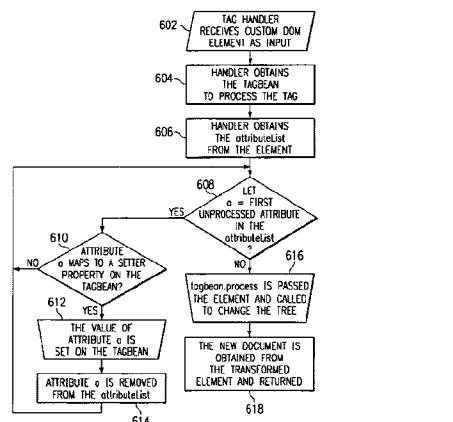
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method for processing custom tags in a document object model (DOM) representation irrespective of the case in which the tags are authored. In an illustrative embodiment, a document object model (DOM) tree is processed to identify custom tags. Upon encountering a custom tag, an appropriate tag handler (e.g., a Java object, an XSL stylesheet, or the like) is invoked. According to the invention, a tag recognition routine is used for recognizing and handling case-insensitive custom tags. As a servlet engine is examining a tag name, if the name does not match one of the registered tags, the routine converts the name to neutral case. If the tag recognition routine recognizes the name as one of the case-insensitive tags, it converts the attributes to the appropriate case, and hands the resulting element off to a correct tag handler for processing.

20 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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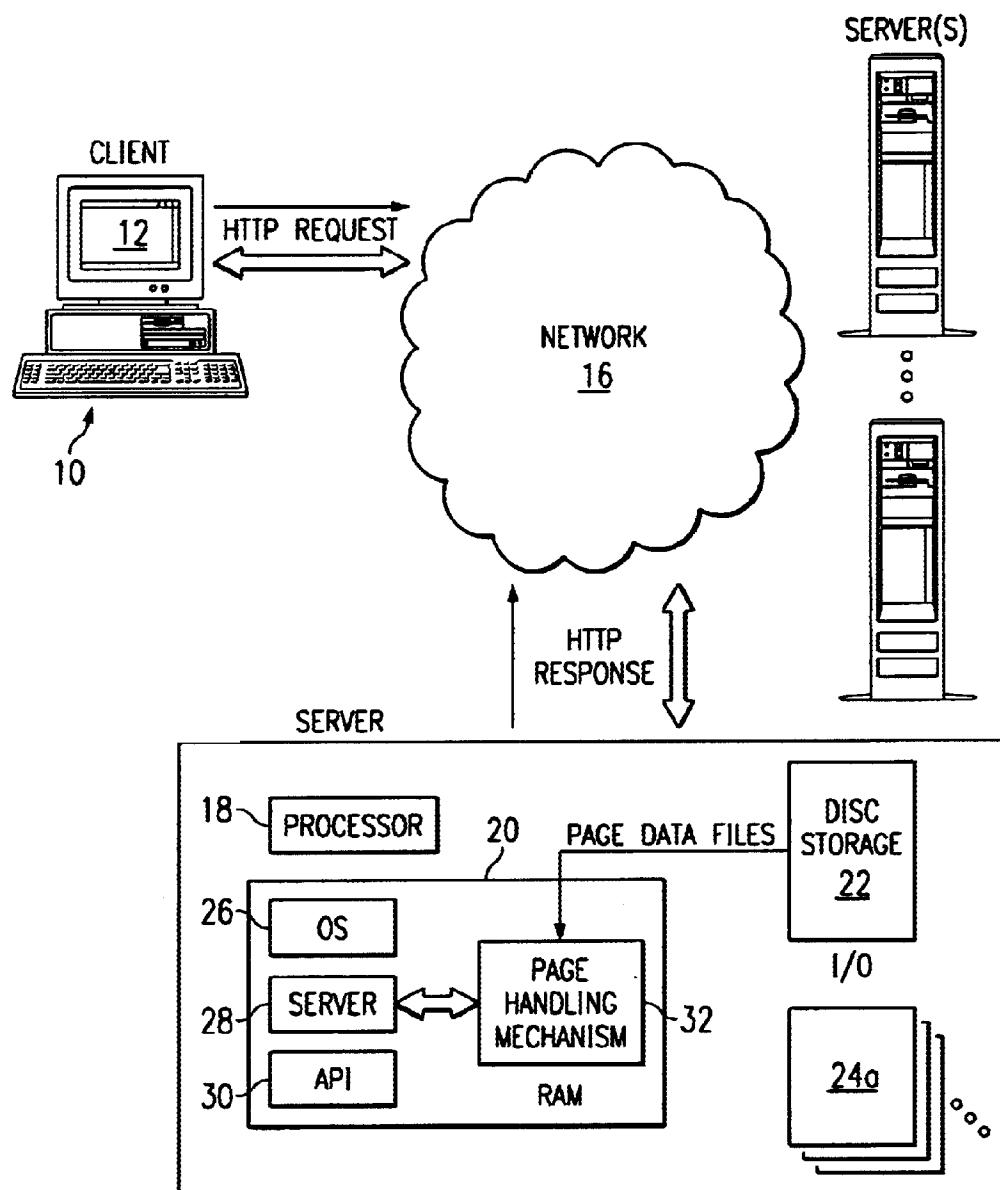
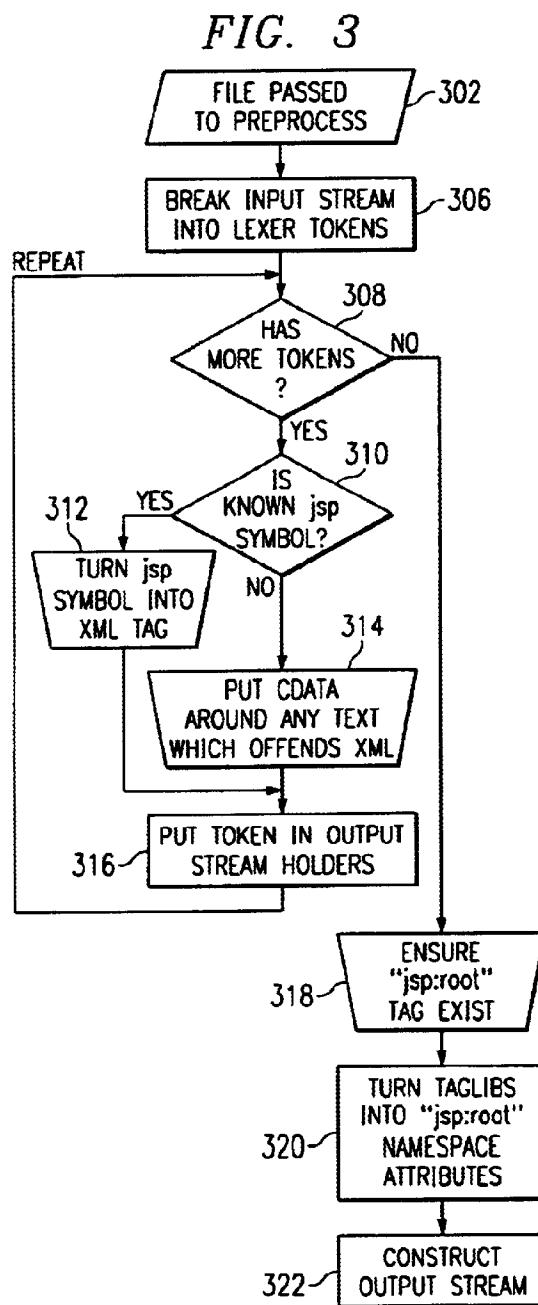
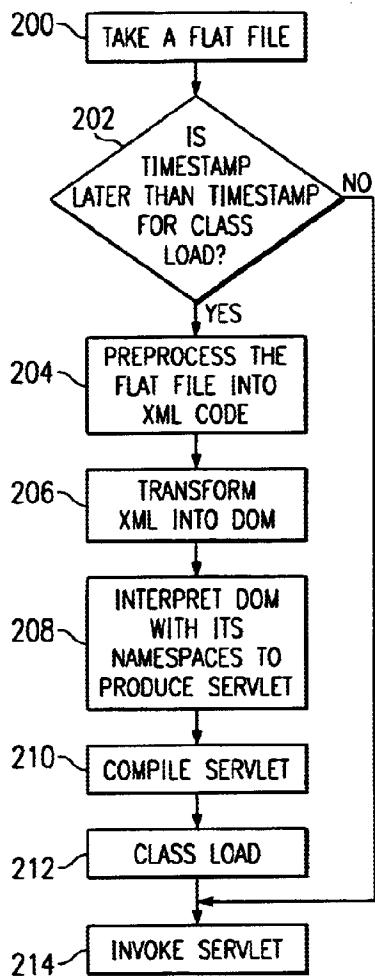


FIG. 1



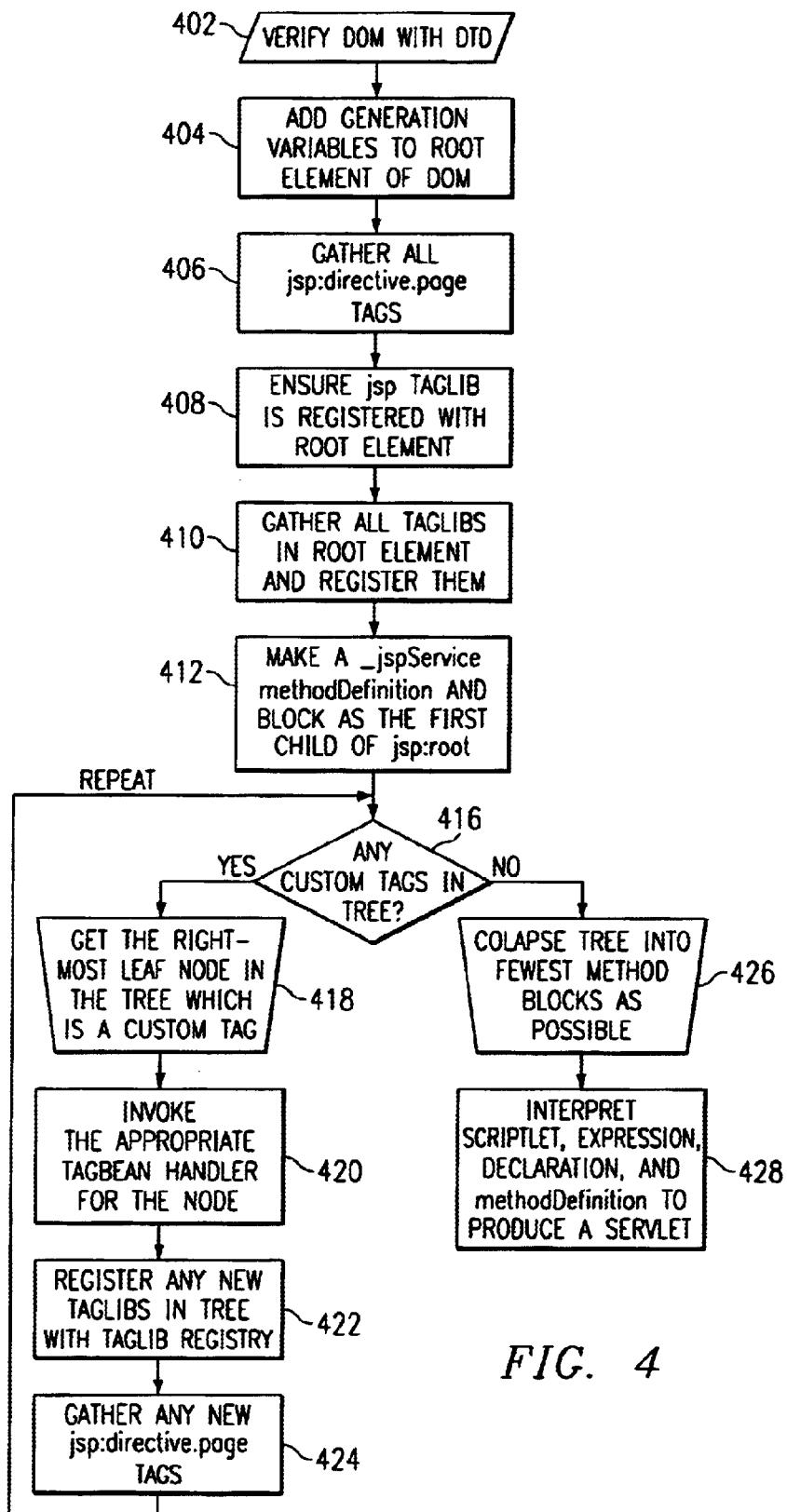


FIG. 4

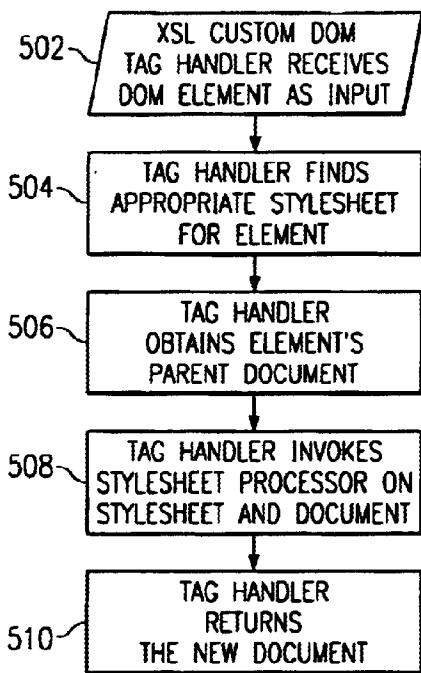
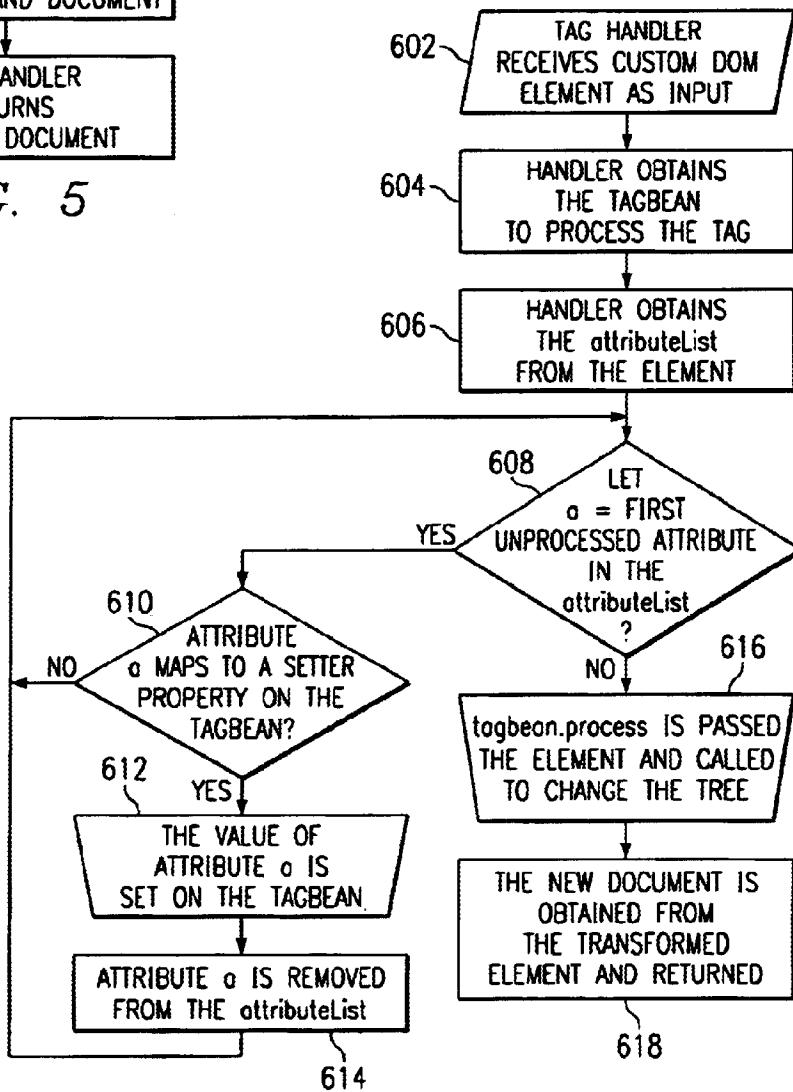
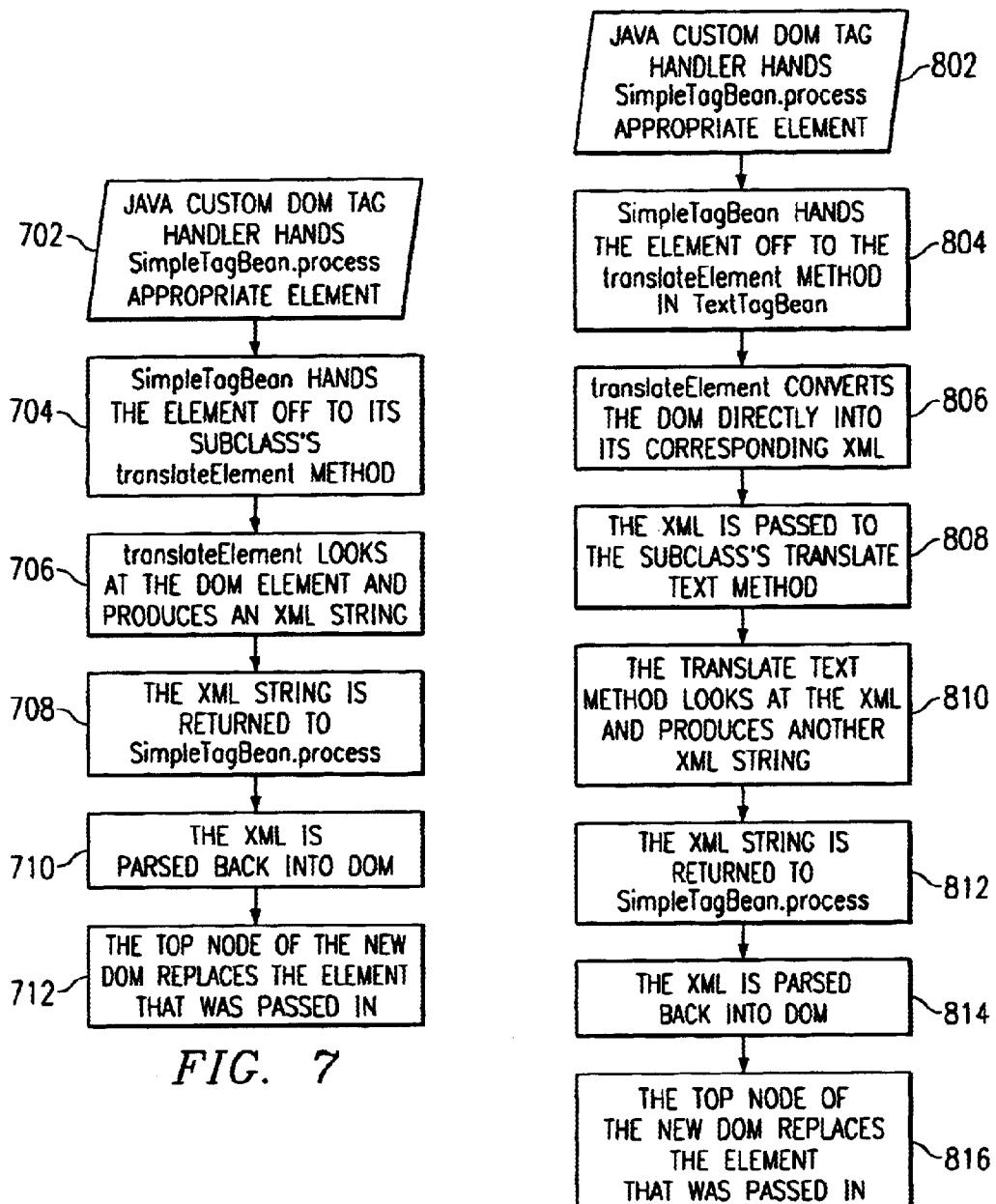


FIG. 5

FIG. 6





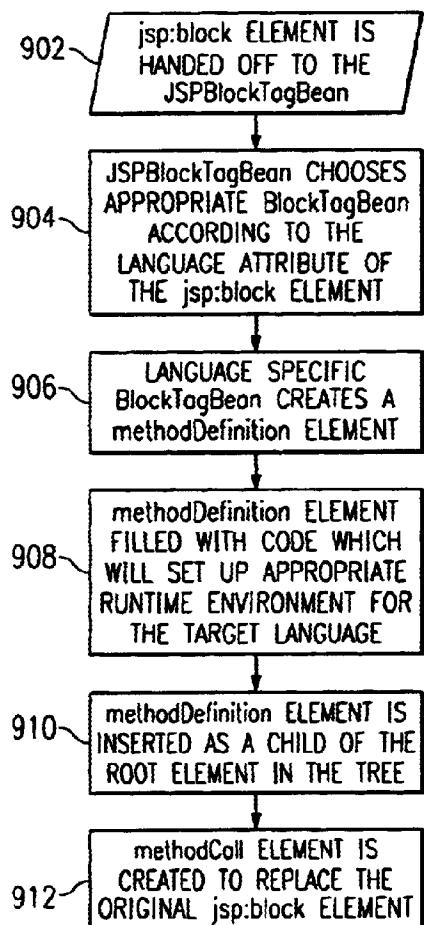
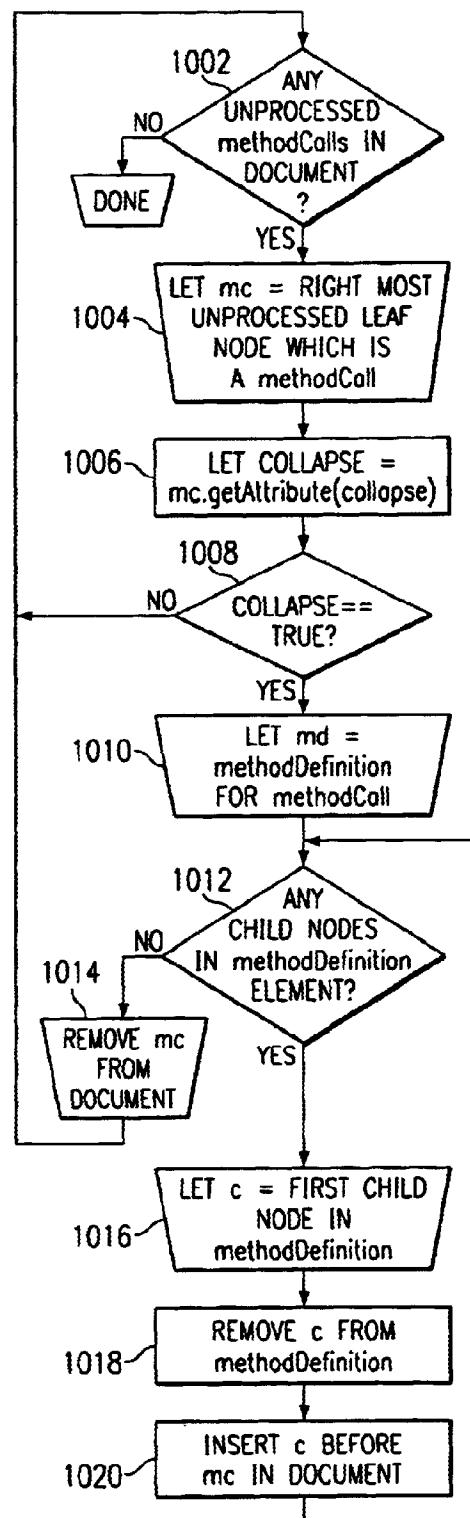


FIG. 10



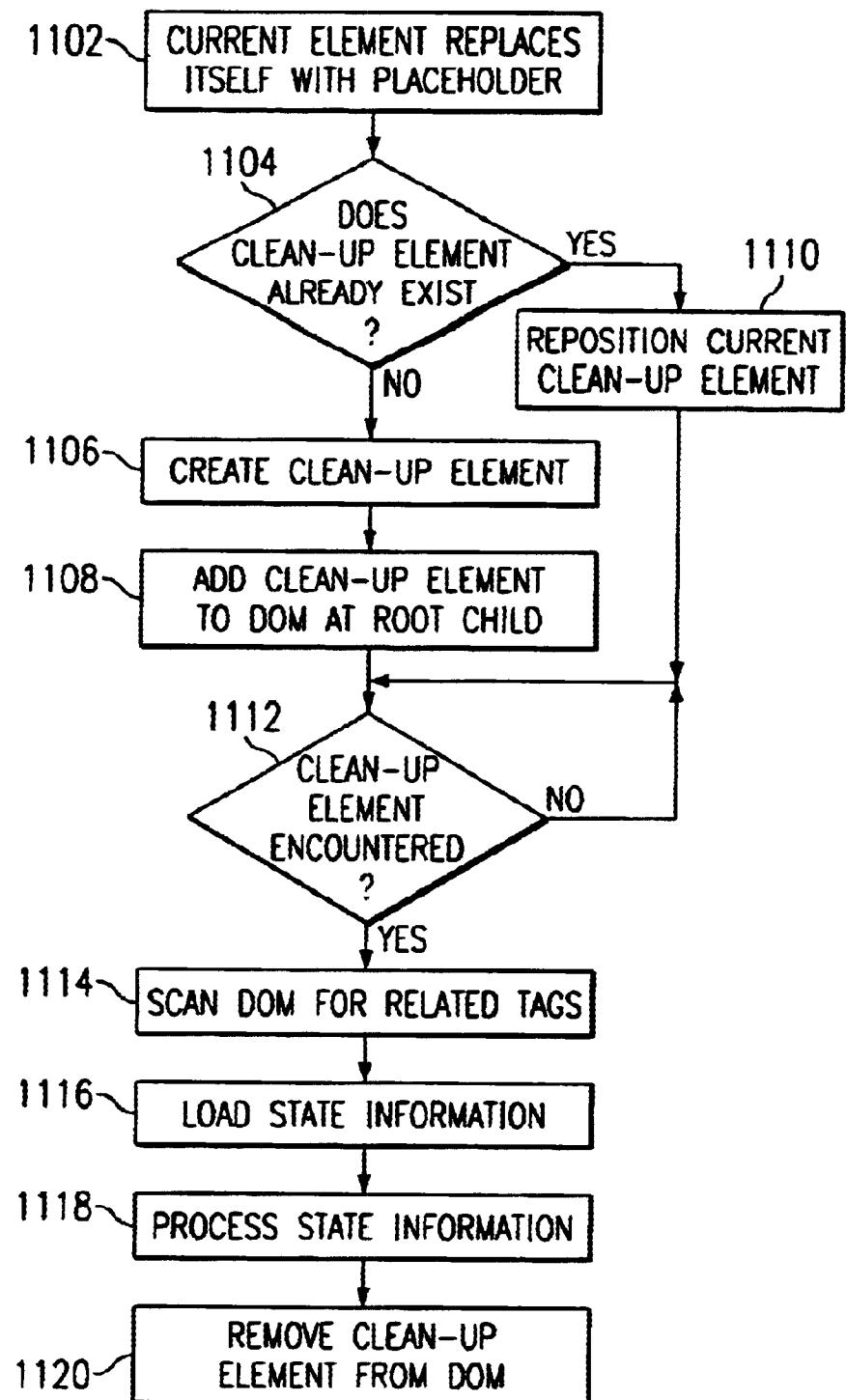


FIG. 11

CASE-SENSITIVE CUSTOM TAG RECOGNITION AND HANDLING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is related to the following copending U.S. patent applications: Ser. No. 09/409,598, entitled "EXTENSIBLE MARKUP LANGUAGE (XML) SERVER PAGES HAVING CUSTOM DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM) TAGS," filed Sep. 30, 1999, Ser. No. 09/409,600, entitled "METHOD FOR PROCESSING A DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM) HAVING CUSTOM TAGS," filed Sep. 30, 1999; Ser. No. 09/409,372, entitled "SCRIPTING LANGUAGE BLOCKS TO SUPPORT MULTIPLE SCRIPTING LANGUAGES IN A SINGLE WEB PAGE," Sep. 30, 1999; Ser. No. 09/409,373, entitled "METHOD FOR VERIFYING CONTEXT BETWEEN MULTIPLE RELATED XML TAGS IN A DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM)," filed Sep. 30, 1999; Ser. No. 09/409,377, entitled "METHOD FOR MANAGING CUSTOM TAG LIBRARIES," filed Sep. 30, 1999; Ser. No. 09/409,370, entitled "METHOD FOR PROCESSING A DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM) TREE USING A TAGBEAN," filed Sep. 30, 1999; and Ser. No. 09/409,376, entitled "A METHOD FOR DEVELOPING A CUSTOM TAGBEAN," filed Sep. 30, 1999.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

The present invention relates generally to Internet publishing technologies and, in particular, to techniques for dynamically serving web page content.

2. Description of the Related Art

A Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) file uses a limited set of tags to convey basic information about the structure of a web document, e.g., whether given text is a heading or a paragraph. With HTML, the style and logic of the document are hardcoded. HTML does not provide tags that define the meaning of the page element. To address this limitation, web content is now being authored in eXtensible Markup Language (XML), which provides a way for an author to create a custom markup language to suit a particular kind of document. In XML, each document is an object, and each element of the document is an object. The logical structure of the document typically is specified in a Document Type Definition (DTD). A DTD may be used by the author to define a grammar for a set of tags for the document so that a given application may validate the proper use of the tags. A DTD comprises a set of elements and their attributes, as well as a specification of the relationship of each element to other elements. Once an element is defined, it may then be associated with a stylesheet, a script, HTML code or the like. Thus, with XML, an author may define his or her own tags and attributes to identify structural elements of a document, which may then be validated automatically. An XML document's internal data structure representation is a Document Object Model (DOM). The DOM makes it possible to address a given XML page element as a programmable object. It is basically a tree of all the nodes in an XML file.

Page serving technologies are evolving at a rapid pace. Since 1997, three new major technologies have attempted to supplement, if not replace, dynamically generated HTML,

i.e. database or CGI scripts used to generate a web page on the fly. These technologies are Microsoft's active server page (ASP), Sun Microsystems's Java server page (JSP), and the Extensible Style Sheet Language (XSL/XSLT) being promoted by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). They provide for the generation and serving of dynamic web page content by enabling a page creator to write IHTML and then to embed pure programming logic inside the page markup. Microsoft's ASP and Sun's JSP are very similar in that they both are essentially web templates that enable given code (e.g., code written in Java) to be embedded in static HTML to be served in response to a client browser request. In an illustrative example, a server (and, in particular, a Java runtime servlet) responds to a client jsp request as follows: the servlet retrieves a flat file corresponding to the requested page, translates that file into a Java servlet, compiles the servlet, class loads the servlet, and then invokes the servlet to cause given (e.g., customized) web content to be returned to the requesting browser. XSL/XSLT, to the contrary, is rooted in formatting and manipulating XML. XSLT, in particular, provides extensible mechanisms for defining templates to manipulate XML of any custom DTD.

The existing techniques for serving dynamic content have various limitations. Conventional server-side scripting on a web page can be complicated and, therefore, such scripting is usually difficult to maintain and evolve. Further, with existing technologies, typically only a single scripting language is allowed on a web page. This limitation is acceptable, so long as only one author is responsible for editing the page, or if all of the responsible authors know and use the same scripting language and the language of choice is supported by the web server. Microsoft's ASP technology supports multiple scripting languages, but only one language may be used on a page. Moreover, multiple languages cannot be embedded in one another, and their order of execution is undefined. Further, page-serving technologies such as ASP and JSP are not XML-compliant, and neither ASP nor JSP provides an extension mechanism to allow authors to add custom tags.

It is also known in the art to provide a web page author with a library of preexisting custom tags. An illustrative product of this type is Cold Fusion, which is HTML-centric. This product, however, does not afford the author the ability to create custom tags. Macromedia's Dreamweaver product has a tag construction mechanism, but this product does not allow for the embedding of custom tags, nor does it allow the document to be reorganized by the tags. It also keeps the script code on the page. In particular, the script is hidden from the user, but it is still present on the page, and it may be viewed and/or edited from within another editor. However, the modifications made in another tool are not maintained. Microsoft provides a similar technology, called design-time control (DTC), that hides code from the user but still maintains the code on the page. DTC is not XML-compliant and it does not allow DTCs to be embedded within one another. Nor does the DTC mechanism allow the document to be reorganized. In addition, the DTC syntax is quite cumbersome for the page author. Moreover, while other DTC-aware tools will hide the script code correctly, basic text-editors can still edit the code, and the changes made will not be importable back into the DTC-aware tools. DTC also does not provide access to the Document Object Model. Other products or technologies that have custom tag extensions include HeiHTML and Meta-HTML. Essentially, these are tag macro definition languages for HTML. Such languages, however, are not XML compliant.

Another problem associated with prior art page authoring techniques is that authors typically write tags in whichever

case most suits the author. Thus, a given author may write a tag as "HTML," "html," "HtML" or some other variant. XML, however, is case-sensitive, while HTML and other tag handling mechanisms are not. Thus, it has also not been possible to obtain case-insensitive tag recognition from case-sensitive tag language.

There remains a need in the art to provide new techniques for publishing Internet content that can fully leverage the manipulation and template mechanism of XSLT with the scripting capability of the JSP/ASP model. The present invention addresses this need.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a method for processing custom tags in a document object model (DOM) representation irrespective of the case in which the tags are authored.

A further object of this invention is to enable a custom tag used in a document object model (DOM) tree to be defined with an associated case sensitive attribute. When that attribute indicates that the custom tag name is not case sensitive, the name of the tag together with a variant of the name are stored in a registry. If, however, the attribute indicates that the custom tag name is case sensitive, only the name of the tag is registered. Later, when the custom tag is processed, a tag recognition routine is used to convert the tag name to a neutral or lower case if necessary to invoke the required tag handler.

In an illustrative embodiment, a document object model (DOM) tree is processed to identify custom tags. Upon encountering a custom tag, an appropriate tag handler (e.g., a Java object, an XSL stylesheet, or the like) is invoked. According to the invention, a tag registration routine is used for recognizing and handling case-insensitive custom tags. As a servlet engine is examining a tag name, if the name does not match one of the registered tags, the routine converts the name to lower or neutral case. If the tag recognition routine recognizes the name as one of the case-insensitive tags, it converts the attributes to the appropriate case, and hands the resulting element off to a correct tag handler for processing.

The foregoing has outlined some of the more pertinent objects and features of the present invention. These objects should be construed to be merely illustrative of some of the more prominent features and applications of the invention. Many other beneficial results can be attained by applying the disclosed invention in a different manner or modifying the invention as will be described. Accordingly, other objects and a fuller understanding of the invention may be had by referring to the following Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention and the advantages thereof, reference should be made to the following Detailed Description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a simplified illustration of a client-server environment in which the present invention may be implemented;

FIG. 2 is a high level flowchart illustrating a servlet generation routine of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a flowchart illustrating how one preferred technique for preprocessing a flat file into XML compliant code;

FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating a preferred algorithm for processing custom tags according to the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating a custom DOM tag XSL handler routine for an XSL style sheet;

FIG. 6 is a flowchart illustrating a custom DOM tag Java handler routine for a Java object;

FIG. 7 is a flowchart illustrating the operation of a DOM In, Text Out tagbean;

FIG. 8 is a flowchart illustrating the operation of a Text In, Text Out Text tagbean;

FIG. 9 is a flowchart illustrating a routine for supporting multiple scripting languages in a single page;

FIG. 10 is a flowchart illustrating a routine for collapsing a DOM tree into a fewest number of method calls according to the present invention; and

FIG. 11 is a flowchart illustrating a routine for verifying the context of related XML tag elements in a DOM tree.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention is a page handling framework and runtime engine operative on a server in a computer network such as the Internet. As is well-known, in the Internet paradigm as illustrated in FIG. 1, a client machine, such as machine 10, may use an application, such as a web browser 12, to access a server 14 via a computer network 16. Network 16 typically includes other servers (not shown) for control of domain name resolution, routing and other control functions. A representative server 14 is a computer or workstation having at least one processor 18, system memory (e.g., RAM) 20, disk or other permanent storage 22, I/O devices 24a-n, an operating system 26, a server program 28, and an application programming interface (API) 30 that provides extensions to enable application developers to extend and/or customize the core functionality thereof through software programs including plug-ins, CGI programs, Java servlets, and the like. One such software program is an inventive page handling mechanism 32, which processes an HTTP page request and generates a response by feeding data into an output stream as will be described. In an illustrative embodiment, the page handling mechanism is implemented in Java and is executable in a Java Virtual Machine (JVM) by a processor in a known manner. Alternatively, the program may be written in whole or in part in native code. The inventive functionality, of course, may be part of the integral web server program.

A representative server machine is an IBM Netfinity platform running the Unix operating system and a server program such as IBM WebSphere Version 2.0. Of course, any other computer hardware or software may be used.

A representative client is a personal computer, notebook computer, Internet appliance or pervasive computing device (e.g., a PDA or palm computer) that is Pentium-, PowerPC®- or RISC-based. The client includes an operating system such as Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Windows CE or PalmOS. A typical client includes a suite of Internet tools including a Web browser, such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer, that has a Java Virtual Machine (JVM) and support for application plug-ins or helper applications. Communications between the client and the server typically conform to the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (Version 1.0 or higher), and such communications may be made over a secure connection.

The flowcharts of FIGS. 2-11 illustrate the inventive functionality of the page handling mechanism.

Servlet Generation

FIG. 2 illustrates how a flat web page file is processed according to the present invention to generate a servlet. The routine begins at step 200 by retrieving a flat file from the server's database. At step 202, a test is made to determine whether a timestamp for the flat file is later than a timestamp for the class load for the file. If the outcome of the test at step 202 is negative, the file has already been processed. Control then branches to step 214, where the file is invoked as a runtime operation. If the outcome of the test at step 202 is positive, the routine continues at step 204 to preprocess the flat file into XML compliant code and, at step 206, to transform the XML into a Document Object Model (DOM) data representation. The Document Object Model is a platform- and language-neutral interface that allows programs and scripts to dynamically access and update the content, structure and style of documents. In particular, the Document Object Model provides a standard set of objects for representing HTML and XML documents, a standard model of how these objects can be combined, and a standard interface for accessing and manipulating them. The Document Object Model (DOM) Level 1 Specification is available from the World Wide Web Consortium.

Step 204 is illustrated in more detail in FIG. 3. Preferably, steps 204–206 are accomplished concurrently using an XML parser, such as the IBM WebSphere XML4J parser. The routine then continues at step 208. At this step, the DOM along with its namespaces are interpreted to produce a Java object, such as a servlet. This process is illustrated in more detail in FIG. 4. Thus, according to the invention and, in particular, steps 204, 206 and 208, the present invention generates a page template via DOM translation of the flat file. At step 210, the servlet is compiled. The routine then continues at step 212 to class load the servlet. Control then continues at step 214, which has been previously described.

Steps 204–212 preferably occur at page translation time. Page translation typically occurs the first time the page (namely, the request for the flat file) is accessed or hit. Step 214 is executed to serve the requested page in response to the originating HTTP client request. In particular, the servlet is invoked with standard IHttpRequest and IHttpResponse objects, and it generates a response by feeding data into an output stream. The data is provided to the client browser for rendering in the usual manner.

File Preparsing

FIG. 3 illustrates a preferred technique for preparsing a flat file into XML compliant code. This was step 204 in FIG. 2.

The routine begins at step 302 by passing the flat file to the preprocessor. At step 306, the input stream comprising the flat file is broken into tokens. A token is identified for each symbol, text string or whitespace in the input stream, as will be illustrated below. Thus, a given token has a value associated therewith. The routine then performs a test at step 308 to determine whether the stream has any more tokens to process. If so, the routine continues at step 310 to test whether the token value is a known JSP (or ASP) symbol. If the outcome of the test at step 310 is positive, the routine branches to step 312 to turn the JSP (or ASP) symbol into a corresponding XML tag. If the outcome of the test at step 310 is negative, the routine branches to step 314 to identify any text that violates XML constraints. Following either step 312 or step 314, the routine continues at step 316 to place the token value in an output stream holder. Control then returns to step 308 to process additional tokens. If the outcome of

step 308 is negative, however, the routine branches to step 318 to verify that the “jsp:root” tag exists in the stream. At step 320, the parser turns tag libraries into “jsp:root” namespace attributes. The routine then continues at step 322 by constructing the output stream. This completes the preparsing routine.

Processing a DOM with Custom Tags

A preferred algorithm for processing a DOM with custom tags is illustrated in FIG. 4. Preliminary processing is provided by steps 402–412. These steps may be omitted. In particular, the routine begins at step 402 by verifying the DOM, for example, with a JSP DTD. At step 404, the routine adds servlet generation variables to the root element of the DOM for later handling. The routine then continues at step 406 to gather all jsp:directive.page tags to ensure a consistent state. At step 408, the jsp tag libraries (which provide support for JSP 1.0 mechanisms) are registered with the root element. Thus, for example, custom tags are registered through an XML <taglib>“tag-library.xml”</taglib>, according to the JSP 1.0 specification.

By way of brief background, where a plurality of custom tags exist, it is desired to provide a cataloging and registration mechanism to organize the tags and to prevent naming collisions. According to the present invention, a tag library, or “taglib,” is used for this purpose. As will be described below, the tag library is preferably specified by a URI and comprises a page, preferably XML, identifying the tag namespace and listing the tags recognized in the namespace as well as the directives on how to load the appropriate tag handlers. Thus, in a representative embodiment, in the tag-library-xml file, the name of the custom tag is listed, as well as a Java object name, or a URL identifying an XSL stylesheet.

The following is an example of a custom tag library:
In the JSP context:

```
<jsp:root xmlns:sample=""/>
</jsp:root>
Here, a namespace "sample" is defined by the relative URL of
"/sample/sample-taglib.xml".
The content at the URL would look as follows:
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<taglib>
  <tag name="currentTime"
    class="xsp.sample.CurrentTimeTagBean"
    dtd="currentTime.dtd"/>
  <tag name="currentTimeXSL"
    styleSheet="http://localhost/xsp/sample/currentTimeCustomTag.xsl"
    dtd="currentTime.dtd"/>
</taglib>
```

45 This registers a Java TagBean to handle sample:currentTime tags and registers the currentTimeCustomTag.xsl as an XSL handler for sample:currentTimeXSL. As a bonus, both register currentTime.dtd to verify the correctness of the sample:currentTime and sample:currentTimeXSL tags before the formatting of those tags occurs.

50 Returning now to FIG. 4, the routine then continues at step 410. In particular, any additional tag libraries are gathered and registered with a main tag handler. According to the present invention, a tag handler is a process that is used to hand-off execution (of a custom tag in the DOM) to some other process, e.g., a Java object (through a custom tag interface), or via an XSL stylesheet. The routine then continues at step 412 by inserting a __jspServiceMethodDefinition as the last child of the jsp:root element. The methodDefinition preferably has the content of most of the servlet code. As will be described in more detail

below, the `jsp:block` element is appended to the method-Definition to begin the servlet's definition as a Java code block by default or with as the value of the `jsp:page` directive attribute (if it is specified).

The main processing of the routine begins at step 416. At this step, a test is made to determine whether the DOM tree has any custom tags that have not been processed. If so, the routine branches to step 418 to locate preferably the left-most leaf node of the tree that satisfies its requirements as a custom tag. The routine then continues at step 420 to invoke an appropriate tag handler (e.g., a Java object, the XSL stylesheet, or the like). Two variations of step 420 are illustrated in the flowcharts of FIGS. 5-6. As will be seen, the appropriate tag handler is given a current tag element and is expected to process it. Typically, a new DOM is returned from the tag handler and is then processed for new tag libraries. At step 422, the new tag libraries are registered in the tag library registry. The routine then continues at step 424 to gather all new `jsp:directive` tags. The routine then returns to step 416.

This loop continues until all custom tags have been processed in a like manner. When the outcome of the test at step 416 is negative, the routine branches to step 426 to collapse the resulting DOM tree into as few as possible method blocks. This operation is illustrated in FIG. 10. The routine then continues at step 428 to generate the servlet by interpreting scriptlet, expression, declaration and method-Definitions. Thus, for example, at step 428, the routine interprets the DOM by replacing "`jsp:scriptlets`" with inlined code, by replacing "`jsp:expressions`" with prints, by replacing "`jsp:declarations`" with variables and method definitions, by replacing "`xsp:methodCalls`" with method calls, and by replacing "`xsp:methodDefinitions`" with method definitions. As described in FIG. 2, the resulting servlet is then compiled and class loaded to be ready for use by the runtime code.

Custom Tag Definition

Preferably, the DOM tree identifies custom tags as follows. As noted above, the JSP 1.0 specification included a tag library mechanism that defines how to plug in a tag. The specification, however, left the details of the taglib mechanism completely open, with the exception that a url must be used to specify the location of the taglib. According to one aspect of this disclosure, this abstract concept has been unified with an XML namespace and mapped into an XML file. In addition, case-sensitive language support has been added as will be seen.

In an illustrative embodiment, the Document Type Definition (DTD) for a taglib according to the present invention is:

```

<!ELEMENT taglib (tag)*>
<!ELEMENT tag EMPTY>
<!-- Note: either class or styleSheet must exist (but preferably not both) -->
<!ATTLIST tag
  name      CDATA #REQUIRED
  class     CDATA #IMPLIED
  styleSheet CDATA #IMPLIED
  caseSensitive (true|false) "true"
  dtd       CDATA #IMPLIED>

```

This data structure defines that a tag library is composed of zero or more tags. Each tag is defined with a name and optional attributes class, styleSheet, and dtd. A tag must have either a class or stylesheet attribute (but preferably not both) to specify a correct tag handler. The value of name is used to identify what tags it handles. If a tag's name is "scriptlet" and its taglib prefix is "jsp", then this rule handles any tag

named "jsp:scriptlet". The class and styleSheet attribute dictate which of the two mechanisms are used to handle a custom tag. If the rule specifies a class, then a Java object, e.g., an object satisfying a custom tag interface, is used to process the tag. If the rule specifies a styleSheet, then an XSLT styleSheet is used to process the tree. The optional dtd parameter is used to verify the contents of the custom tag, for example, whether the tag has the proper attributes.

Case-Sensitive Tag Handler

XMI is case sensitive. On the contrary, HTML and other known tag mechanisms are case-insensitive. As a consequence, web page authors often write tags in whichever case is most suited to the author. According to the present invention, the `caseSensitive` attribute is added into the taglib definition to facilitate handling of tag case sensitivities. In particular, when the servlet engine reads the taglib definition, preferably it registers two entries for a case-insensitive tag and one entry for a case sensitive tag. In particular, if the tag is not case-sensitive, the value of the name attribute is registered together with an altered (e.g., lower, neutral or upper) case version of the name prepended with a given symbol (e.g., "<") that is not a valid character in an XML attribute. A neutral case is any case that can be found or created deterministically by a given algorithm. If the tag is case-sensitive, however, only the name attribute is registered.

The following is an example of this registration process for an illustrative taglib:

```

<!-- contents of case-taglib.xml for namespace "case:" -->
<taglib>
  <tag name="FOO"
    class="com.ibm.xsp.Foo"
    caseSensitive="false"/>
  <tag name="BAR"
    class="com.ibm.xsp.Bar"
    caseSensitive="true"/>
</taglib>

```

In the engine, the following attribute values are then registered under the prefix "case:" for the illustrative example:

"FOO"→TagHandler type class "com.ibm.xsp.Foo"
 "<foo"→TagHandler type class "com.ibm.xsp.Foo"
 "BAR"→TagHandler type class "com.ibm.xsp.Bar"

As can be seen, there are two entries for the case-insensitive tag and one entry for the case-sensitive tag. The "<foo" tag will not to be registered because "<" is an invalid character in an XML attribute.

Thus, in the preferred embodiment, a case-neutral tag is prepended with a character that preferably is invalid in XML, e.g., prepend "<" + lower-case(name). This algorithm allows the page author to have multiple definitions for similar names; e.g., "FOO" and "foo" can be defined, however, only one of definitions can be case-insensitive.

As described above, the algorithm for processing custom tags includes the steps of: walking the DOM tree, locating the custom tags, and then invoking the appropriate tagbean handler for each identified tag. These were steps 416, 418 and 420 in FIG. 4. The following logic is used to recognize the case-sensitive custom tags and to call the appropriate tagbean handler according to the present invention. For convenience, the inventive functionality for processing the case-sensitive tags is set off in italics:

```

public boolean
isCustomTag(String prefix,
            String tagName)
{
    Hashtable hashtable = getPrefixTable(prefix);
    if (prefix == null) {
        //prefix is not registered
        return false;
    }
    if (hashtable.contains(tagName)) {
        return true;
    }
    String caseInsensitive = "<" + tagName.toLowerCase();
    if (hashtable.contains(caseInsensitive)) {
        return true;
    }
    return false;
}
public TagHandler
getCustomTagHandler(String prefix,
                     String tagName)
{
    Hashtable hashtable = getPrefixTable(prefix);
    if (prefix == null) {
        //prefix is not registered
        return null;
    }
    TagHandler handler = (TagHandler) hashtable.get(tagName);
    if (handler == null) {
        String caseInsensitive = "<" + tagName.toLowerCase();
        handler = (TagHandler) handler.get(caseInsensitive);
    }
    return handler;
}

```

In this code, the first italicized section is executed if the tag name is not in the hash table. Under this circumstance, the code creates a string `caseInsensitive="<" + tagName.toLowerCase()`, and then checks to see if the resulting string is in the hash table. If so, the routine returns true; otherwise, the routine returns false. As noted above, if the tag is not case sensitive, there will be a lower case name attribute prepended with the invalid XML character as a result of the registration process. Thereafter, the tag handler routine is executed. This is the second italicized section above. If there is no handler in the hash table registered for the name, then the code builds a string `caseInsensitive="<" + tagname.toLowerCase()` as before. The routine then checks again to see whether there is a handler registered for this string name. If so, the routine returns the handler, which is then executed in the usual manner. According to the inventive route, attributes of the custom tag are also converted to an appropriate case and passed to the given tag handler.

Given the above example, when the engine does not find "foo" (because only "FOO" is registered), the routine then looks for "<foo", finds it, and returns the proper tag handler.

Thus, given the following representative XML taglib file, walking the DOM tree to invoke the appropriate tag handlers generates the following "conversation" between the servlet engine and its tag recognition routine:

```

<jsp:root xmlns:case="/xsp/case/case-taglib.xml">
    <case:foo>foo</case: foo>
    <case:BAR>bar</case:BAR>
    <case:bar>bar</case:bar>
    <case:FOO>foo</case:FOO>
</jsp:root>

```

Q. Is "case:foo" a custom tag?
A. No.
Q. Is "case:<foo>" a custom tag?

A. Yes. TagHandler="com.ibm.xsp.Foo"
Q. Is "case:BAR" a custom tag?
A. Yes. TagHandler="com.ibm.xsp.Bar"
Q. Is "case:bar" a custom tag?
5 A. No.
Q. Is "case:<bar>" a custom tag?
A. No.
Q. Is "case:FOO" a custom tag?
A. Yes. TagHandler="com.ibm.xsp.Foo".
10 The italicized code is the tag recognition routine. As the servlet engine is examining a tag name, if the name does not match one of the registered tags, the routine converts the name to neutral case. If the routine recognizes the name as one of the case-insensitive tags, it converts the attributes to the appropriate case, and hands the resulting element off to the correct tag handler (i.e., the target) for processing. The target tag handler is written to the standard tag handler API and behaves like any other tag handler.

The present invention is quite advantageous. It enables the support of legacy tags (e.g., a server side include <SERVLET> tag) in a case-insensitive way even though XML is case-sensitive. Using the present invention, the engine can take any case-sensitive tag, write an intermediary bean, and make the tag case-insensitive without changing any code in the case-sensitive tag handler.

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Other Tag Handling Routines

As noted above, FIGS. 5-6 illustrate the preferred tag handling routines. As described, there are two types of tag handling: tags handled by XSLT (FIG. 5) and tags handled by Java code (FIG. 6). Each of these handlers will now be described in more detail.

XSL Custom Tag Handler

The XSL tag handler routine begins at step 502 by receiving the DOM element as input. At step 504, the tag handler then finds the appropriate stylesheet for the element as supplied by the taglib rules. The routine then continues at step 506 with the tag handler obtaining the element's parent document. At step 508, the routine invokes a stylesheet processor on the document and stylesheet. Finally, at step 510, the tag handler returns the new document to complete the translation.

Java Object Custom Tag Handler

FIG. 6 illustrates a preferred operation of the custom DOM tag Java object handler. By way of brief background, as used herein, a "tagbean" is a Java object that implements a TagBean interface. Preferably, the interface according to the invention is as follows:

50

```

public interface TagBean
{
    public void
    process(Element element);
}

```

The TagBean interface defines a process method that takes an element in from the DOM tree and performs some function against that element. The context of the entire DOM tree is available to the process method for manipulation through the DOM APIs.

The routine begins at step 602 with the Java tag handler receiving the DOM element as input. At step 604, the handler then obtains the appropriate tagbean for the element as supplied by the taglib rules. A number of tagbean routines are illustrated in FIGS. 7-9 and will be described in more

detailed below. At step 606, the handler extracts an attributeList from the element. The routine then performs a test at step 608 to determine whether there are any unprocessed attributes. If so, the routine branches to step 610 to determine whether the attribute maps to a setter property on the tagbean. If the outcome of the test at step 610 is negative, control returns to step 608. If, however, the outcome of the test at step 610 is positive, the routine continues at step 612 to set the value of the attribute on the tagbean. Control then continues at step 614 to remove the attribute from the attributeList. Processing then continues back at step 608.

Thus, for each attribute in the attributeList, the handler checks for a corresponding setter property on the tagbean. If a corresponding setter property exists, the value of the attribute is set on the tagbean and the attribute is removed from the attribute list. When the outcome of the test at step 608 indicates that all attributes have been checked against the tagbean, routine branches to step 616. At this step, the tagbean's process method is called given the DOM element so that it can manipulate the tree in whatever manner it deems fit. When tagbean.process() is complete, the new document is returned from the tag handler at step 618. This completes the processing.

FIGS. 7-9 illustrate tagbeans that are useful in the present invention.

DOM In, Text Out Tagbean

FIG. 7 illustrates a simple DOM in, Text out macro that has the following class:

```
public abstract class SimpleTagBean implements TagBean
{
    public abstract String
    translateElement(Element element);
    public final void
    process(Element element);
}
```

SimpleTagBean is a class created to simplify the task of writing a tagbean. Using this class, the developer merely has to implement the translateElement method, which takes in a DOM element and returns the corresponding text macro expansion. In particular, the routine reads the DOM tree (e.g., using the DOM APIs), produces an XML block (typically a scriptlet), and uses the XML block to replace the current element in the tree. This is advantageous to the writer of the tagbean because, using the invention, he or she does not need to know how to create new nodes and to populate them with values. All the writer has to do is create an XML expanded form of the element passed in. While this approach requires increased execution time at translation, translation only happens once every time the page changes; thus, the technique has little impact on server performance.

The SimpleTagBean class works as demonstrated in the flowchart of FIG. 7. The routine begins at step 702 with the Java tag handler calls SimpleTagBean.process with the appropriate tag element. At step 704, the SimpleTagBean hands the element off to its subclass's "overwritten" translateElement method. In the translateElement method, at step 706, the subclass looks at the element and its sub-elements and attributes to produce a text macro expansion of the node. The routine then continues at step 708 with the text expansion being returned to the SimpleTagBean.process method. At step 710, the XML is parsed back into DOM. At step 712, the top node of the new document object replaces the element that was passed in from the previous document. In

particular, in step 712, the top node of the new DOM replaces the element that was passed into translateElement(). This completes the processing.

Text In, Text Out Tagbean

FIG. 8 illustrates a Text in, Text out tagbean that may be used to isolate the developer from the DOM API. This is especially useful if the element contains only simple information or does simple query string replacement. A representative class is as follows:

```
public abstract class TextTagBean extends SimpleTagBean
{
    public abstract String
    translateText(String text);
    public final String
    translateElement(Element element);
    public final void
    process(Element element);
}
```

TextTagBean extends the SimpleTagBean functionality. In particular, the TextTagBean extends the SimpleTagBean class and implements the translateElement function to inherit the String V DOM output functionality. Instead of the developer writing translateElement, however, he or she now writes translateText.

Referring now to FIG. 8, the routine begins at step 802 with the Java custom DOM tag handler handing the SimpleTagBean.process the appropriate element. At step 804, the routine hands the element off to the "overwritten" translateElement method. At step 806, the translateElement method converts the DOM directly into its corresponding XML. In particular, the TextTagBean.translateElement() takes the element and flattens it into XML without interpreting any of the XML. The routine then continues at step 808, with the XML then being passed to the translateText method of the subclass. At step 810, the translateText method reads the string and processes it to return a new XML string. In particular, translateText looks at the XML string and manipulates it to produce another text representation of it and returns this representation to TextTagBean.translateElement(). At step 812, the new XML string is returned to the TextTagBean.translateElement, which returns the string to SimpleTagBean.process. SimpleTagBean.process finishes the processing at step 814, by turning the string into DOM and, at step 816, by replacing the previous element with the root of the new document. Thus, in step 816, the top node of the new DOM replaces the element that was passed into translateElement(). This completes the processing.

Multiple Scripting Language Blocks

Another tagbean is illustrated in FIG. 9. This routine, called jsp:block, enables page developers to use multiple scripting languages in the same page. As will be seen, this enables people with different skill sets to add value to the same page. It also enables the developer to chose another language that might be more suitable for a specific job.

The routine begins at step 902 with each jsp:block handed off to the JSPBlockTagBean. At step 904, the JSPBlockTagBean chooses the appropriate BlockTagBean according to the language attribute of the jsp:block element. At step 906, the language-specific BlockTagBean creates a methodDefinition element which, at step 908, is then filled with code to set up an appropriate runtime environment for the target

language. At step 910, the methodDefinition element is inserted as a child of the root element in the document. The routine then continues at step 912 to create a methodCall element to replace the original jsp:block element.

The present invention provides numerous advantages over the prior art. The inventive mechanism enables multiple scripting languages in a Java server page, and it enables a developer to embed one scripting language within another, which is a function that has not been available in the known art.

DOM Tree Processing

FIG. 10 illustrates a preferred routine for collapsing the DOM tree into the fewest possible methodCalls. The routine begins at step 1002 to test whether there are any unprocessed methodCalls in the document. If not, the routine is done. If, however, the outcome of the test at step 1002 is positive, the routine continues at step 1004 by setting a variable mc equal to the right-most unprocessed leaf node that is a method call. At step 1006, the routine sets a variable collapse equal to an attribute mc.getAttribute(collapse). At step 1008, the collapse attribute is checked. If this attribute is not true, control returns to step 1002. If the outcome of the test at step 1008 is positive, then the contents of the corresponding methodDefinition are expanded in place, and the methodDefinition and methodCalls are removed from the tree. In particular, the routine continues at step 1010 by setting a variable md equal to the methodDefinition for the methodCall. At step 1012, a test is run to determine whether any child nodes exist in the methodDefinition element. If not, the routine branches to step 1014 to remove mc from the document, and control returns to step 1002. If, however, the outcome of the test at step 1012 is positive, the routine continues at step 1016 to let c equal the last child node in the methodDefinition. At step 1018, c is removed from the methodDefinition. The routine then continues at step 1020 to insert c before mc in the document. Control then returns back to step 1012. This completes the processing.

For optimization purposes, it is desired to verify context between multiple related XML tags in a DOM. One or more of these related XML tags are custom tags within the context of the inventive framework. By way of brief background, when processing a single custom tag element, that element may need access to all other related tags, processed and unprocessed, within the DOM. Unfortunately, however, there may be other unprocessed custom tags in the DOM that, when processed, would result in one or more related tags the current element is interested in. One solution to this problem is to pass some state information from the current element through the page handling engine. A preferred technique, however, is to use the DOM itself to indicate state.

Clean-up Processing

FIG. 11 is a flowchart illustrating this clean-up processing. The routine begins at step 1102 during the processing of the DOM tree with a current element being processed replacing itself with a placeholder element. The placeholder element includes attributes indicating its state. At step 1104, a test is performed to determine if a clean-up element already exists for the element being processed. If not, the current element then creates a clean-up element at step 1106. At step 1108, this clean-up element is added to the DOM in a position where it will be processed after all elements related to the current element have been processed. Thus, for example, the clean-up element is added to the DOM as a

child node to the root position. If the outcome of the test at step 1104 indicates that such a clean-up element already exists, the current element need not create another clean-up element; rather, the current element need only move the existing clean-up element later in the DOM to ensure it is processed after any other related elements might be processed. This is step 1110. When the processing routine finally encounters the clean-up element, as indicated by a positive outcome of the test at step 1112, this element scans the entire DOM for all the related tags (now placeholders) of interest. This is step 1114. At step 1116, the clean-up element loads the state information from each and, at step 1118, processes them accordingly. When complete, at step 1120, the clean-up element removes itself from the DOM. In this way, the technique shifts processing from each individual element to a single, last-processed element.

Thus, in the preferred embodiment, a two-pass solution is implemented. In the first pass, simple translation is performed on the tag, creating new tag place holders to be handled by a clean-up phase. For example, assume the DOM includes the following tags: system:macro1, system:macro2, and system:macro3. It is also assumed that each relies on specific information from other tags but not all the information is available until all of them have been touched once. On the first pass, system:macro1 expands to __system__macro1 and performs all the metadata expansion it can perform at this time to assist the clean-up node. At this time, it also inserts a system:cleanup in the tree as the last child of jsp:root (assuming it is not already there).

The second pass is triggered when the clean-up node is hit. For proper processing, it should check to make sure the first pass has completed (no system:macro1 or macro2 or macro3 tags in the tree). If other clean-up nodes exist in the tree, it should remove itself from the tree and let the other nodes handle the clean-up later. Once the clean-up node has determined that the tree is in the correct state, it goes through all the artifacts left by the first process and expands them with all the context available.

Tagbean Code Reduction

Another optimization reduces the amount of code in the tagbeans. By way of background, if a developer expands everything necessary to perform a function of a tag, that process may produce large amounts of code. In particular, the writing of custom tagbeans may result in a large amount of Java code being generated into the resulting servlet. Because this code may be largely common across servlets generated from the same tagbean (variable names might change, but little else), according to the invention, the functionality is delegated to outside code as much as possible. Preferably, the code is factored into a separate Java bean, and the most convenient place to delegate is the very tagbean generating the code. Thus, the tagbean need only generate enough Java code for the servlet to call out to the separate bean. This dramatically reduces the code in the tag bean handler.

As a result, this optimization improves maintainability and greatly simplifies debugging. In addition, because the code is not expanded, the function is hidden from anyone who has access to the generated servlet code. In addition, as a separate Java bean, developers are encouraged to put more error-handling code in the system that may not get put in otherwise. It also further stabilizes the system.

Thus, in a preferred embodiment, instead of doing inline expansion of code, the developer should take runtime values of attributes and sub-elements and generate code to make

them parameters of a method on the very same bean that can be called at runtime to do the real work.

The present invention provides numerous advantages over the prior art. In effect, the inventive page handling mechanism combines the manipulation and template mechanism of XSLT with the scripting capabilities of the JSP/ASP model. In addition, the invention provides a framework for enabling any programming language to be plugged into that model. Further, given that most languages are easily defined in Java byte code, the invention is economical to implement in a runtime using, for example, a Java Virtual Machine.

The present invention uses custom DOM tags together with a framework and runtime that provides a powerful macro language to XML/JSP. The custom DOM tags allow a web page author the ability to define a simple markup language tag, e.g., <SHOPPING_CART>, that, at page translation time, is converted into script code by a generic Java object or an XSL stylesheet. This script code is then compiled into Java code and then into a Java servlet, yielding excellent performance servicing a client's request. Because the custom tag replaces the script code in the authored page, the page is kept clean and easy to maintain. The script code is kept separate and, thus, need only be debugged once. Normal ASP development, on the contrary, would force this code to remain in the page, and it would have to be debugged after every modification.

The inventive framework is quite advantageous in that it is built on top of XML. Moreover, one of ordinary skill will appreciate that the framework is definable programmatically or with XSL. In addition, macros written according to the invention can affect the output of an entire page and not just the content between a given pair of tags.

As noted above, the inventive mechanism is preferably implemented in or as an adjunct to a web server. Thus, the invention does not require any modifications to conventional client hardware or software. Generalizing, the above-described functionality is implemented in software executable in a processor, namely, as a set of instructions (program code) in a code module resident in the random access memory of the computer. Until required by the computer, the set of instructions may be stored in another computer memory, for example, in a hard disk drive, or in a removable memory such as an optical disk (for eventual use in a CD ROM) or floppy disk (for eventual use in a floppy disk drive), or downloaded via the Internet or other computer network.

In addition, although the various methods described are conveniently implemented in a general purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by software, one of ordinary skill in the art would also recognize that such methods may be carried out in hardware, in firmware, or in more specialized apparatus constructed to perform the required method steps.

Further, as used herein, a Web "client" should be broadly construed to mean any computer or component thereof directly or indirectly connected or connectable in any known or later-developed manner to a computer network, such as the Internet. The term Web "server" should also be broadly construed to mean a computer, computer platform, an adjunct to a computer or platform, or any component thereof. Of course, a "client" should be broadly construed to mean one who requests or gets the file, and "server" is the entity which downloads the file.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by letters patent is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing a document object model (DOM) representation of a document, the method comprising the steps of:

examining a custom tag name from a set of one or more custom tags in the DOM;

if the custom tag name matches a registered tag name in a set of registered tag names, invoking a first custom tag handler;

if the custom tag name does not match any registered tag name in the set of registered tag names, converting the custom tag name to an alternate tag name by changing a case of one or more characters in a character string for the custom tag name; and

in response to a determination that the alternate tag name is recognized as a registered tag name in the set of registered tag names, invoking a second custom tag handler, wherein the first custom tag handler and the second custom tag handler are not identical.

2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein the step of invoking a given tag handler further comprises the steps of: converting attributes of a given custom tag to an appropriate case; and

passing the converted attributes to the given tag handler.

3. The method as described in claim 2 wherein the given tag handler converts the given custom tag into a given representation.

4. The method as described in claim 3 wherein the given representation is script code.

5. The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of registering tag names to generate the set of registered tag names.

6. The method as described in claim 5 wherein the registering step includes:

determining a case sensitivity of a given custom tag name; if the given custom tag name is case insensitive, registering first and second versions of the given custom tag name; and

if the given custom tag name is case sensitive, registering only the first version of the given custom tag name.

7. The method as described in claim 6 wherein the first version is the given custom tag name and the second version is a lower or neutral case version of the given custom tag name prepended with a given symbol.

8. The method as described in claim 7 wherein the given symbol is a character that is invalid in an XML attribute.

9. The method as described in claim 1 wherein the alternate tag name is a lower case version of the custom tag name.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising: registering at least one case-sensitive custom tag handler; and

registering a case-insensitive custom tag handler.

11. A computer program product in a computer useable medium for processing a document object model (DOM) representation, the computer program product comprising:

means for examining a custom tag name from a set of one or more custom tags in the DOM;

means for invoking a first custom tag handler if the custom tag name matches a registered tag name in a set of registered tag names;

means for converting the custom tag name to an alternate tag name by changing a case of one or more characters in a character string for the custom tag name if the custom tag name does not match any registered tag name in the set of registered tag names; and

means for invoking a second custom tag handler, wherein the first custom tag handler and the second custom tag handler are not identical, in response to a determination that the alternate tag name is recognized as a registered tag name in the set of registered tag names.

12. The computer program product of claim 11 wherein means for invoking a given tag handler further comprises:

means for converting attributes of a given custom tag to an appropriate case; and

means for passing the converted attributes to the given tag handler.

13. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the given tag handler converts the given custom tag into a given representation.

14. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein the given representation is script code.

15. The computer program product of claim 11 further comprising:

means for registering tag names to generate the set of registered tag names.

16. The computer program product of claim 15 wherein the means for registering further comprises:

means for determining a case sensitivity of a given custom tag name;

means for registering first and second versions of the given custom tag name if the given custom tag name is case insensitive; and

means for registering only the first version of the given custom tag name if the given custom tag name is case sensitive.

17. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein the first version is the given custom tag name and the second version is a lower or neutral case version of the given custom tag name prepended with a given symbol.

18. The computer program product of claim 17 wherein the given symbol is a character that is invalid in an XML attribute.

19. The computer program product of claim 11 wherein the alternate tag name is a lower case version of the custom tag name.

20. A computer system comprising:

a processor;

system memory;

means for examining a custom tag name from a set of one or more custom tags in the DOM;

means for invoking a first custom tag handler if the custom tag name matches a registered tag name in a set of registered tag names;

means for converting the custom tag name to an alternate tag name by changing a case of one or more characters in a character string for the custom tag name if the custom tag name does not match any registered tag name in the set of registered tag names; and

means for invoking a second custom tag handler, wherein the first custom tag handler and the second custom tag handler are not identical, in response to a determination that the alternate tag name is recognized as a registered tag name in the set of registered tag names.

* * * * *